

# Kirk Consulting

Date: May 11, 2010

To: Elizabeth Szwabowski, Grading Plans Examiner – San Luis Obispo County  
Planning & Building Department

From: Rachel Kovesdi, Principal Planner – Kirk Consulting

RE: Miramonte Ranch As-Built Submittal

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***Property Location and Agricultural Setting:***

Miramonte Ranch is a working cattle ranch located at 5190 Ontario Road, immediately south of the City of San Luis Obispo. The property encompasses approximately 1,340 acres. The project site is within the San Luis Bay Inland planning area of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan. Miramonte Ranch is owned by JB Ventures, LLC.

There are several existing agricultural accessory structures located throughout the project site. These structures are support structures for the existing agricultural operations of the site. In addition to the historical agricultural use on the site, there is one existing ranch residence on the site. Existing improvements on the site include agriculture-related infrastructure (i.e. ag roads, stock ponds for watering livestock, electricity, water tanks, etc).

The Miramonte Ranch property is zoned for agricultural use and has been in agricultural production for decades. The property has supported both dairy farming and cattle operations since the original land grant in the mid-nineteenth century. The property is currently grazed in compliance with Natural Resources Conservation Service standards, and is under a Williamson Act contract.

JB Ventures purchased the property in 2006 and since that time has leased much of the range land to Guidetti Land and Cattle Company for cattle grazing. The number of cows or cow-calve pairs at the ranch is determined by Guidetti Land and Cattle, but has been limited by poor road access to the range land and inadequate water availability. The goal of the agricultural road grading conducted in 2007 was to bring on more cattle by providing access and water at various locations throughout the ranch, to increase vegetation of perennial grasses for grazing, and to reach areas of fenced off pens for steer.

JB Ventures plans to own their own herd of cattle and graze them on Miramonte Ranch as they become more experienced ranchers themselves. Miramonte Ranch has worked with Susan Litteral of the Natural Resource Conservation Service to develop a business plan regarding the ranching operations. Ms. Litteral has offered suggestions and improvements to enhance the road drainage and erosion control measures. These measures have been incorporated into the as-built grading plan set included with this package.

JB Ventures' owners' objective for this agricultural project is to ensure continued long-term viability of existing and potential future agricultural operations, specifically cattle grazing activities.

### ***Ranch Roads***

In order to provide access to greater areas of rangeland, JB Ventures needed to enhance the ranch roads. Roads existed on the ranch, but in many cases were in poor condition or on steep slopes. The clay soil was slick and dangerous to traverse when wet and did not allow access for cattle trucks, well drilling equipment or other farm equipment.

The main road leading away from the ranch house to the rest of the rangeland was already in existence; the location between culverts and near a stream bank had been determined many years before JB Ventures purchased Miramonte Ranch. JB Ventures hired Granite Ridge Engineering Group to design new access roads that complied with San Luis Obispo County Code Section 22.52.050, Level Two Ag Exempt Roads. Granite Ridge addressed each element (a) through (k) of 22.52.050C(2)(b) paying careful attention to slopes, blue line stream setbacks, visibility restrictions from public roads, drainage and erosion control measures.

Granite Ridge designed the road improvements to minimize erosion to a level far less than the preexisting natural state, all in accordance with best management practices. The ranch roads were designed in compliance with County Code 22.052.050C(2)(b) and Natural Resource Conservation Service's (NRCS) Conservation Practice Standard for Access Roads (Code 560, Revision September 2004).

The agricultural road improvements were designed to utilize existing roads wherever possible. Where new roads were required, the roads were designed to follow natural topography, thereby minimizing grading and site disturbance. All cut and fill slopes were designed to be treated with the appropriate erosion control method.

### ***Project History***

Road maintenance activities, along with the construction of new ranch roads occurred intermittently over the course of a few weekdays in August and September of 2007. In mid-August, the main road surface was smoothed, watered daily to keep dust to a minimum, then the soil was compacted and covered with crushed red rock base to prevent erosion of exposed soils and allow for all-weather access to the remote areas of the ranch.

The two turn-around areas up the main road from the ranch house were also graded in mid-August of 2007; each took approximately four hours to complete. No other work has been done in these areas. (NRCS, Conservation Practice Standard "Access Road" Code 560 recommends turnouts on single lane roads where vehicles travel in both directions on a limited basis.)

Lastly, the ranch roads in the remote areas of the property were graded over the course of one week in September 2007 and covered with crushed red rock during the first week of October, 2007. All road work ceased at Miramonte Ranch when the County of San Luis Obispo issued a Stop Work Notice.

JB Ventures hired a licensed independent contractor to rehabilitate and construct the roads. The contractor was instructed to maintain a compliant 16' foot wide road. Once completed, with all erosion control and revegetation measures in place, the roads will be no more than 16 feet wide.

#### ***Rock Base***

The red rock base used on the improved ranch roads is called "35 Ranch Pit" and is mined and sifted in San Luis Obispo County near Tiffany Ranch Road by Jim Sprafico. The rock was crushed before it was delivered to Miramonte Ranch. The rock gravel that can be seen piled at select places along the ranch roads will be used under the cattle water troughs and tanks for leveling. A new water storage tank has been purchased and the manufacturer warranty specifically requires that Miramonte Ranch install the tank on a gravel bed.

#### ***Erosion Control Measures***

As part of the ranch road work, Granite Ridge Engineering has designed numerous erosion control measures to identify sources of sediment, reduce or eliminate erosion and protect the ranch creeks and drainage courses, adopting recognized best management practices. The attached Erosion Control report details those efforts.

#### ***Conclusion:***

The grading in question, undertaken for the purpose of agricultural road maintenance, is supportive of existing and future agricultural uses on the Miramonte Ranch property. This grading is entirely related to the continuing grazing use of the property and meets agricultural grading permit exemption requirements set forth in the County Land Use Ordinance Section (22.52.050 (2b)).

The enclosed as-built plan set is intended to provide County Planning, Building and Ag Commissioner's Office staff with accurate information pertaining to the condition of the site, as well as current and future agricultural uses of this property. It demonstrates the supportive relationship of the existing and new agricultural roads to the existing and planned agricultural uses on the site. [This exhibit also clarifies that the roads on the property function in a capacity which supports historical, current and future agricultural production and are not connected with any current or potential future residential use. This as-built plan is submitted in compliance with the settlement reached between JB

Miramonte Ranch  
As-built Grading Project Description  
May 11, 2010

Ventures and the San Luis Obispo County District Attorney's Office as part of the resolution of the previously filed criminal case, M 421827.

Please do not hesitate to contact me after your preliminary review if you have any questions or require additional information. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this submittal. I look forward to working with you toward a successful resolution of this matter.

Sincerely,



Rachel K. Kovesdi  
Principal Planner

Enclosures

Copy: Art Trinidad, San Luis Obispo County Code Enforcement  
Michael Conger, San Luis Obispo County Planning Department